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S E R M O N

[on Luke x. 42.]

Preach'd to

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Young Persons,

APRIL 2^d, 1716.

At the Desire of several Young Men,
and published at their Request.

By JOHN NESBITT.

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Printed for JOHN CLARK, at the Bible
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BY JOHN L. REBUTT.

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A SERMON

Preach'd to
Young Persons.

LUKE X. 42.

*But one thing is needful, and Mary
hath chosen that good Part, which
shall not be taken away from her.*

THE Context shews us, that those things, for which we may think we deserve Praise, may prove the Matter of Rebuke. *Martha* having such valuable Guests as our Saviour and his Followers, is very solicitous to have them plentifully entertained. For this she expected to be commended, and to have her Sister reproved for not joining with her ; but instead of commending her Diligence, our Lord rebukes her anxious Care : *Martha, Martha, thou art* Ver. 41.
B *careful*

careful and troubled about many things. Her Name is repeated, the more to fix the Admonition, and her Regard of what he said. That *Martha* was a covetous Worldling, is too severe an Opinion; but that she was to blame, in preferring a lesser Duty to a greater, and neglecting the one to pursue the other, as also for censuring her Sister for not joining with her, is evident, by Christ's Reprehension of the one, and praising the other. In the Commendation given of *Mary*, we have,

1. The Subject, or that about which she was chiefly employ'd: *One thing.* And that was, attending on Christ, and entertaining his Doctrine, to improve his Words and Instruction to her Salvation. This is the *one thing*, that should take place of all other Cares and Concerns.

2. The Necessity of this, and the Preference given to it: *One thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good Part, &c.* This is no Discharge to any from their lawful Employments; nor Release from the primitive Sentence, *In Gen. 3. 19. the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, till thou return to the Ground;* but it is to teach us, that in all things Christ, and our Salvation by him, must have the Preheminence. It is Foolishness to be mindful of those things, for which we forget our selves. True Wisdom is to secure that, which neither in Life, nor by Death, can be taken from us. So that the Doctrine I design to prosecute, from these Words of our Saviour, is this:

Matt. 16.
26.

Christ.

Christ is the one thing needful for all, and to improve him for our Salvation, is to choose the good Part, and which will have his Commendation.

The Apostle to the Romans says, *If God be for us, who can be against us?* Many may, and ^{31.} will shew their Enmity; but it is impotent Malice, for they shall not be able to hurt us. While Christ commends us in our Choice, we may be easy and quiet, tho' others may censure and reproach us for it. His *well done* is more to give us Comfort and Confidence at his Appearing, than all the hard Speeches of censorious Friends, or malicious Enemies, can be, to make us uneasy in our present Course or Choice. My Design is in this Discourse to shew, that as Christ is the Summ of God's Mercies to us, so he is to be improved in every Part of our Salvation by us. I shall therefore,

First, Explain this Necessity of Christ, or how he is in a particular manner needful.

1. He is absolutely needful. Some Things are necessary for the Convenience and Ornament of Life; but tho' we want them, we may live happily without them. He who hath no Money may have that which is equivalent; Goods will sometimes do where there is no Gold; but Christ is the *one thing needful*, so as nothing can supply his Place. He is our Life, Col. 3. 4: not only the Author, but the Staff of our Life. *I am* (says he of himself) *the living Bread*, John 6. *which came down from God: My Flesh is Meat* 51, 55.

indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed : so that the Being and Living of a Christian is in him. **Acts 4.** *Neither is there Salvation in any other : for there is* 12. *none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved.* All the constituting Parts of a Christian are only in and from him. There is neither Weight nor Worth in the Christian Name, but what it derives from thence: Nothing but Christ can either make or maintain a real Christian.

2. He was always, and is constantly need- **Rev. 13.8.** ful. If we look backward, he is *the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World.* And if we look forward, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin,* for those that slight him. The whole

Acts 10. Scriptures are a Testimony of Christ : *To him* 43. *give all the Prophets witness.* Moses and Elias wait on Jesus in the Mount, to tell us, that in him the Law and the Prophets have their Accomplishment. He was as really the Object of

John 8. Abraham's Faith, in the Promise, before his 56. Incarnation; as he was to John, when he said,

—**1. 29.** *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World.* As he is unchangeable in his Divine Person, so he always was, and is, and will be the same, in his Offices, in all Generations of the Saints. There never was but one Way for fallen Man, to Heaven, and that is

Heb. 13.8. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* Some things are very needful at one Season, that are not so at another: as Physic to the Sick, *but the Whole need not the Physician:* and as Food to the Hungry, *but the full Soul loatheth an Honey-comb:* but Christ is always needful, in Health and Sickness, in Want or in Abundance, in Life and in Death.

3. He

3. He is universally necessary, or the *one thing needful*, for Influence in every thing, which is of Use in the Service of our Souls. He is not only needful because of the Precept, by which we are commanded to regard him; but as the only Means for Man to get to Heaven. And all those things, which are of any use to us, have their Strength and Virtue only from Christ, or his Influence. So that they are all *one*, not only as they are appointed for one End and Design; but as Christ is all in all in them, and they both lead to him, and are all Streams from him as the Head and Spring. Without him neither *Paul* can plant, nor *Apollo* improve what is planted. The Promises are Wells without Water, unless he fill them; Ordinances are empty Glasses, unless he shew his Face through them; Ministers are but empty Sounds, unless he speak in and by them. Therefore he is absolutely, constantly, and most extensively needful.

Secondly, I shall consider the Particulars in which Christ is to be improved, as thus needful. And here we may take a compendious View of those Characters the Word of Truth hath given him, in which we may with Wonder behold the Riches of Grace to fallen Man. Here we must own, that as Sin hath abounded to our Ruin, so Grace hath by him much more abounded to our Restoration. He is *a Prince* and *a Saviour*, *an Apostle* and *High-Priest*, a *Leader* and *Commander*. He hath all Treasures or unsearchable Riches in him, and all for the Use and Service of those, whom the Father hath given him. He is therefore to be improved by
all,

all, according to the Characters he bears, as the one and only Mediator, both for Reconciliation and Intercession, or in all and every Part of our Salvation. And,

1. Christ is to be improved for comfortable Views and Discoveries of God. That there is a God; can't be deny'd, since it is evident by *the things that are made*. Many Pagans, who lived in Times and Places of Darkness, will rise in Judgment against the daring Atheists of our Days, who *rebel against the Light*. With what lofty Flights do some of them speak of the Divine Being! as may be seen in their own Writings, and others who have made Collections from them. But yet, after all the Discoveries they could make from themselves, or their Fellow Creatures, he remain'd to them *the unknown God*. They felt or sought after God in the dark, but could not find him. And tho' they were convinced of his Being, and own'd it; yet they became vain in their Imaginations about him, nor could they find a Way to please or enjoy him: for this only the Sacred Scriptures teach, and especially the Gospel. *Moses* in the Law shews us God, as glorious in his Holiness, terrible in his Justice; there we hear him commanding and threatening guilty Sinners, *for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin*: but by Christ we know God, as forgiving Sin: there he is all Majesty, here a God of infinite Mercy and Compassion. *This is Life Eternal, to know thee the only true God*, and in *Christ Jesus* this is only to be had. The Creation declares God to be infinitely above us; the Law reveals him as against us, and angry with us; but Christ only hath declar'd him for our Comfort,

Rom. i.
20.

Huetii
Quest.
Alnet.
p. 120,
&c.

Acts 17.
23.

Joh. 17. 3.

Joh. i. 18.

fort, as ready to forgive, and full of tender Mercies towards us.

2. We must improve Christ, and the Knowledge of him, for that Righteousness, in which alone we can expect our Justification with God. That all are under Sin, both Jews and Gentiles, the Apostle Paul hath proved, *That every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God.* And the Royal Psalmist entreats God not to deal with him in a way of Justice, *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant: for in thy sight no Flesh living can be justified.* And we are elsewhere taught, *By the Works of the Law shall no Flesh be justified.* Both Jews and Christians are agreed there must be a Righteousness, in and for which we must be justified in the Sight of God; but the Controversy is, where we shall have it. The degenerate Jews, *going about to establish a Righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God;* and many, who are called Christians, look for no other Righteousness, but of their own working, a Robe of their own weaving. Now after all the vain Distinctions and Disputes of Men, we find the End of the Controversy in St. Paul's Doctrine; *for Christ, with him, and so to every serious Christian, is the End of the Law for Righteousness, to all them that believe.* The Law hath a preceptive Right to require sinless Obedience, this Christ exactly fulfilled in every Point of it. It hath also a vindictive Right to condemn and punish, because we are guilty by violating of it; and this he hath also answered, by enduring the Penalty and Wrath we deserved. Thus as our Surety, he hath made an End of Sin, and brought in ever,

everlasting Righteousness. *He is made of God unto us Righteousness*, for Pardon and Remission, and for the Acceptation of our Persons into Favour with God again. *Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren* (says the same Apostle) *that through this Man is preached unto you the Forgiveness of Sins. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.*

3. Christ is to be improved as our only pleadable Title to the Eternal Inheritance.

1 Pet. 1. 4. That there is *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven* for them, is the Hope and Comfort of all those who are born again. Now this Inheritance is called *a purchased Possession, unto the Praise of his Glory*, who was the Purchaser of it. He is the one thing needful, not only to free us from the Condemnation and Curse the Law denounceth; but for our Right and Claim to that Crown and Kingdom, which is promised

Joh. 3. 36. to all that believe in him. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life.* He hath it not only in the Promise, but in the Price and Purchase. Some claim of *meer Mercy*, without regard to the Rights of Law, and Justice; others allow Christ to free them from Hell, or *the Wrath to come*, but hope that, for Christ's sake, their own *sincere, but imperfect Obedience*, may be admitted as their *Claim and Title to Heaven*; but we are to claim *in Capite*, Christ is the Saviour of the Body. As divine Grace hath purposed before the Foundation of the World to bestow the Kingdom, so Christ is our only Plea for it; nor will any other prevent our being cast at the Bar of God. In this we

may

may claim with humble Boldness, and be assured of an abundant Entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

4. We are further to improve Christ in order to our Meetness for this Inheritance. It is common among Men for those to inherit, who want their Excellencies from whom the Inheritance was received. We often see a *degenerate Plant* of a *Noble Vine*. Moral, and much less Spiritual, Excellencies are not natural Descendants. But herein are the Riches of Grace in Christ Jesus, that all the Heirs of Promise are by him made *meet for the Inheritance*. We have not only by Sin lost all Right to Happiness, but we are wholly unsuitable to God, and unmeet for his Presence; and without Conformity, or Likeness to God, he can never be our Happiness or Delight. What Harmony can there be between Contraries? or what friendly *Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness?* 2 Cor. 6. What is the most curious Piece of Painting to¹⁴ him, who hath no Knowledge in that Art? Or, what is the most charming Musick to one, who hath no Ear for it? Now, as in and by the first Man we lost God's Favour, Fellowship and Likeness; so by the second Man, *who is the Lord from Heaven*, we must have all restor'd again. As we have born the Image of the earthly *Adam*, an Image of Guilt, and Sin, or 1 Cor. 15. Pollution; so we must bear the Image of the 45, 49. heavenly *Adam*, in Life, Light, and Holiness: for we are predestinated to be conformed to the Rom. 8. Image of the Son, therefore he is made of God²⁹ unto us, *Sanctification*, as well as *Redemption*: He brings not only Pardon, but Purity, and
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comes both by *Water* and by *Blood*: His Laver is not only atoning and pacifying, but cleansing; that at last he may *present a Glorious Church*, Eph. 5. 27. *not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*

5. Christ should also be improved, as the one and only Mediator for Fellowship or Communion with God, in our Walk to Heaven: He is the only Ladder between *Earth* and *Heaven*: As in him there is a Covenant of Peace established between God and Man, so all Intercourse between them is through Christ, and his Intercession. As we are made nigh by the Blood of Heb. 4. 16. his Cross, so we have all our Approaches by Joh. 14. 6. him to the Throne of Grace. *I am the way,* (says he) *no Man cometh to the Father but by me.* Let all Pretences to Saints and Angels, for Mediators of Intercession, remain in the Territories of *graven Images*, among Popish Idolaters: What- Col. 3. 17. *soever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus.* He is our way to God for Reconciliation, and he is therefore our only way Heb. 9. 24. for access in Supplication, because he pleads on the Throne what he paid on the Cross. As none but he is touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, so none but he hath any Plea Isa. 63. 16. to obtain the Mercies we want. *Abraham* is ignorant of us, saith the Church, and *Israel* acknowledgeth us not; but our Redeemer from Everlasting, he is our Advocate. And as we improve him in this Capacity, so we have the Comfort of our State under all our Infirmities and Wants, and maintain our Fellowship with 1 John 2. 1. God while we are in this World. But as we Eph. 3. 12. lose Sight of him, or do not act Faith on his Person, as pleading for us in Heaven, we are discouraged, and find no Help in the Duties we per-

perform, or Petitions we present to God.

6. Christ is to be improved and chosen by us, as our only Safety to Everlasting Life. Angels and Men were soon overturn'd, by resting on their own Foundation; and the best of Saints only stand as they are secured in *Christ Jesus*. Take heed of going out in your own Name, leaning to your own Understanding, or engaging in the Work of Christ, and Salvation by him, in the Strength of your own Resolutions. Vows and Promises soon lose the force and warmth they have in us at their making. *We are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation*; but it is in *Christ Jesus*; Jude v. 1. *therefore be strong in the Lord, and the Power of Eph. 6. 10. his might*. It is because he lives that we shall live. Separate the strongest Saint from Christ, and tho' he was within view of Heaven, he would soon find himself at the Gates of Hell and Death. But as none can pull him from his Throne in Heaven; so none shall pluck any out of his Hand, whom the Father hath committed to his keeping. Thus he is the one Thing to be improved, from first to last, in our Religion. *Even he shall build the Temple of the Lord, Zach. 6. and he shall bear the Glory.* 13.

Thirdly, I proceed to shew, how the attending on Christ, and improving him and his Doctrine, is to choose *the good Part*. Goodness is the proper Motive and Allurement of the rational Faculty: Necessity may compel, but Goodness doth draw. Now, that to give Christ the Preference, or, which is the same Thing, to attend on, and improve him, and his Doctrine, is to act rationally, and to choose

that which is *the good Part*, will appear from the following Considerations.

1. If we compare Christ with all other good Things. These, as they come from Goodness, and lead to God, so they are good; but even the Riches of that Goodness which leadeth to Repentance, when this is neglected, is perverted to harden Sinners in their Rebellion, and abused to the vilest Purposes. Other Things, when laid in the Ballance with Christ, and our Salvation by him, are but nominally good; they have the Appearance of good, to blind Minds, and sensual Sinners, who say, *Who will shew us any good?* But he only is the good that is real and substantial. He will cause those that love him to inherit Substance. While Persons dote on Creatures as their chief Good, they are but like drunken Men, who think themselves Kings and Heroes, while to all sober Spectators they are a Contempt and Derision; or like Children and Fools, who are as much delighted with worthless Toys, as a real Estate.
 2. They rejoice in a Thing of nought. They feed on Ashes; a deceived Heart hath turned them aside.
- Rom. 2. 4, 5. All the Pleasures, Wealth, and Preferments of Egypt, laid in the Ballance with Christ, are found light by the Faith of Moses, who esteemed the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt. Christ, with the worst Treatment we can meet with for following of him, is above all Degrees of Comparison better, than all that can be enjoyed in and from this World without him.

2. 'Tis further evident, that to improve Christ, is to choose *the good Part*, because this suites our better Part. The Body is indeed

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fearfully and wonderfully made, and is to be va- Pfal. 139.
 lued and regarded, as in it, and by it the Soul 14.
 is served; but yet 'tis a *vile Body*, if the Soul be
 compared with it, and soon appears so, when
 the Spirit is departed. It is vile in its Original:
Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou shalt return. Gen. 3. 19.
 'Tis vile also in Composition; the curious
 Frame, on which we bestow so much Care and
 Pains, is but a little well moulded and colour-
 ed Clay. *All Flesh is Grass, and all the goodli- Isa. 40. 6.*
ness thereof as the Flower of the Field. 'Tis like-
 wise vile, as 'tis subject to variety of Miseries
 and Diseases. Man's Days, tho' few, are full
 of Evil. Who can number, or reckon up
 those many Distresses and Miseries that har-
 rass the Bodies of Men, from the racking
 Stone, to the pining Consumption? And 'tis
 still more vile, as it is the Seat and Instru-
 ment of much Sin. View the Body in its way
 of subsisting; Meat is for the Belly, Clothing
 for the Back, but these all perish with the using.
 And what a Spectacle of vileness is the Body,
 when the Soul, the Inhabitant, is fled and re-
 moved? Then it becomes a Banquet for Worms, Eccl. 12.
 and a Mass of Corruption. But on the other 7.
 Hand, consider the unseen Substance, the ne-
 ver dying Spirit, that must return to him that
 gave it; behold the Soul running a Line paral-
 lel to Eternity; and then that must appear to
 be the good Part, which can only satisfy and
 suit it, according to its Excellency: *For what Mat. 16.*
is a Man profited if he gain the whole World, and 26.
lose his own Soul. With Christ you have ful-
 ness of all Provision; here's Change of Raiment Isa. 61. 10.
 that shall never wax old, or be out of Fashion;
 a Laver that will remove every Spot; a Feast
 for

Pfal. 16.
11.

for every Appetite ; Meat that will never corrupt ; Plenty which can never be spent ; and Pleasure which shall never satiate. *In thy Presence* (saith the Psalmist) *is fullness of Joy ; at thy right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.*

Rom. 11.
29.

3. Christ is the good Part, as being that which shall not be taken away. Neither Power nor Policy, Fraud nor Force, shall be able to take away what you have by Christ. Other Things are lent us for Use ; but Christ, and spiritual Blessings by him, are *the Gifts of God without Repentance.* A Pardon sealed in his Blood shall never be reversed ; Peace established shall never be broken ; and the Union between the Soul and Christ shall never be dissolved ; it will abide in Death, and flourish beyond the Grave. He was in the Account of Christ but a Fool, who promised himself the undisturbed Enjoyment of his Goods, tho' well secured : A Fool, not only for bidding an Immortal Spirit feed and feast on such base Provision ; but for promising himself a long Enjoyment of what might leave him before Morning. Some have observed, that *Solomon* was set up by Divine Providence, to give a convincing Proof to all after him, that it is but meer Madness to seek, or expect Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of this

Eccl. 2. 9,
10.

— 1. 2.

Pfal. 49.

10, 11, &c.

— 62. 9.

lower Creation ; And it is agreeable to what his Father had said before him. The surest Entail of the Crown may be cut off ; and we are assured, that *Riches make themselves Wings and flee away ;* but what we have by and in Christ, is not only Everlasting in its Nature, but shall be so to the Possessor. Death, that comes with its Writ of Ejectment, and turns us out as naked as we came into the World, yet even this

last

last Enemy shall not take away one Covenant Blessing, but usher the Believer into the fullest Possession of them all.

Fourthly, I shall now make some Application of this to our selves, in order to influence our Practice. And,

1. From hence we may gather the following useful Inferences.

(1.) We see the Folly of those who think Christ, and all improving of him, the one Thing needful. Those learned Sinners, who treat with Ridicule all Application of Christ to our selves, that call admiring of Christ's personal Excellencies, Fulness and Beauty, an Enthusiastic Devotion, are not dead, while their Writings speak; and a foolish Posterity approve their Sayings. They are so far from being allured, as the Daughters of *Jerusalem* Cant. 6. were, by what the Bride had said of her Belo- 1, 2. ved, to join with her in seeking to converse Job 21. with him; that they say to the Almighty, De- 14. *part from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.* I fear none are more to be reprov'd, than the Youth of this City, in this Matter. It is indeed a great Comfort to see some, in the Days of their Choice, choosing Christ, and lifting themselves under his Banner; but how inexcusable is the Folly of Multitudes, who entertain all Admonitions to chuse this *good Part*, as hard Sayings, and not to be regarded? Shall we, say they, abridge our selves of the Pleasures of Youth? While our Blood is sparkling in our Veins, and all our Senses craving present and sensible Delights; shall we deny our selves, and confine our Thoughts to Christ and

and his Service? O *foolish and unwise!* Do ye thus slight both your Duty and your Interest? Short is your Pleasure, but the Pain perpetual that follows it; and tho' you could lengthen out your Days of sensual Diversion to the Age of the oldest of *Adam's* Children, yet at your latter End you would still be Fools.

(2.) Hence we may learn, that those who mind Religion most, shall have Christ's Approbation, whatever others may think of them. *Martha* was intent upon the Family Affairs, to the neglect of hearing Christ, and conversing with him, and censures her Sister for not joining with her. It is a common Thing for those who are remiss themselves, to censure such, who are more zealous and vigorous in the Concerns of their Souls. The Affairs of the World must be minded; Christ never countenanced a Sluggard. I know the Shop must be opened; but why must the Closet be neglected? They who are most careful to redeem Time for reading, praying, and hearing, are always the most Conscientious in their particular Callings: the best

Ecc. 8. 5. Christian is the best Relation. *A wise Man's Heart discerneth both Time and Judgment.* He that is taught of God to order his Affairs with Discretion, shall not want time for pursuing the great Affairs of Christ and Salvation; and such shall have Christ's Commendation, tho' others may censure them as good for nothing.

(3.) We may hence infer the deplorable Condition of every Person without Christ. What tho', like the rich Man, thou art cloth'd in Purple and fine Linnen, faring sumptuously every Day; tho' thou art as wise as *Solomon* in the Mysteries of Nature, and Constitutions of Kingdoms;

doms ; or, as strong as *Sampson* : yet if thou art without Christ, there are *dead Flies*, or Flies of Eccl. 10. 1. Death, in thy Ointment ; thou art like *Naaman*, 2 Kings of whom it is said, he was a *great Man*, and honourable, a mighty Man in Valour, but he was a Leper ; there can be no Communion between God and you, nor can you ever possibly escape the Wrath to come. There is but one Sanctuary, one City of Refuge. What is the World to any Person when under the burden of Sin, or in sight of his Dissolution ? How can you then sleep without an Interest in Christ, or be easie without Acquaintance with him ?

(4.) Hence we learn, that Contentment well becomes the Christian. Suppose it is with you, as it was with *Peter*, when being ask'd for Tribute Money he had none to pay, yet Christ you see could soon provide. Or, should you be oblig'd to say with him at another Time, *Silver* Acts 3. 6. and *Gold* have I none ; yet you may add with the Apostle of the Gentiles, *As having nothing*, 2 Cor. 6. and yet possessing all Things. The Traveller wants not the Light of the Stars while the Sun is up. Tho' Creatures fail and are not, you are abundantly provided for ; you have the *good Part*, who have chosen Christ as your Portion for both Worlds.

2. I shall add some few Exhortations. You have heard of Christ many and many a Time, and after all, if you should not know him, or be known, that is, approved of him, how sad will your Condition be ? Will neither the Excellencies of his Person, the Greatness of his Design, the Suitableness of what he is, and has, and doth, and will do for you ; nor that bitter Cup which he drunk in your stead : I say, will

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none,

none, nor all of these prevail with you to make Choice of him, as the one Thing needful, and *the good Part*? But I would hope better Things of you; and therefore give me leave to propose the following Exhortations.

(1.) Choose Christ early. You that are Young can never begin too soon. Satan hath instill'd a pernicious Notion into prophane Minds; *A young Saint, and an old Devil*: As if Religion, if long experienc'd, will at last be nauseated; or a serious Youth is most likely to prove the worst of Sinners in old Age. A young Hypocrite will prove an old Apostate; and those who have seem'd to detest all Thoughts of Cruelty or Unkindness to God's Children, like *Hazael*; yet have afterwards appear'd to join, and act a Part with the worst of Men, against those who adhere to Christ, and cannot bend their Minds to the Will and Pride of their Enemies. But tho' *Judas* betray, and *Demas* depart, they who sincerely embark with Christ shall never draw back; he will never leave them, his Grace is sufficient for them, and they shall never depart from him; his Power shall be perfected, or appear in its Perfection, in their Weakness, in making them more than Conquerors over Dangers, and even Death it self. Therefore choose Christ early.

I Cor. 3.
II.

(2.) Choose him only. He is the Foundation, therefore must be first laid, and nothing must be joined with him. *Other Foundation can no Man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ*. Every part of the Building must bear on the Foundation, or all falls into Ruin. He is our Hope; we can have no holding Ground in a Storm but him, and his Strength; and he
that

that believeth in him shall not be confounded. 1 Pet. 2. 6.
 In him you are complete; with him you are in
 all Respects provided; therefore let him that
glorieth glory in the Lord. 1 Cor. 1.
 31.

(3.) Choose him fully, and without Reserve.

As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk Col. 2. 6.
ye in him. He is a *Prince* and a *Saviour*; choose
 him with his *Scepter*, as well as with his *Sacrifice*.
 We are guilty, and therefore must have him as
 our only *High Priest* to make Peace, and to sacri-
 fice, and thereby satisfy for us, and in the Virtue
 of that to plead our Cause. We are Blind and Ig-
 norant, and hence he is made of God *Wisdom*
 unto us, and by him it is given to us to know
 the *Mysteries* of his Kingdom. We have re-
 bellious and obstinate Lusts; he is our *Lord* to
 subdue all our Enemies both without and with-
 in us. Beware then of dividing what are inse-
 parably join'd together: the Priest and the
 Prince must never part.

(4.) Choose Christ finally, and as your ulti-
 mate End. There is the same Reason for abi-
 ding with him, as there is for your first coming
 to him. Having begun in the Spirit beware of
 ending in the Flesh. Some leave Christ because
 of Persecution; others because they can't have
 the Loaves, for which they followed him; but
 do you say as *Peter* did, when Christ asked the
 Disciples, *Will ye also go away?* Lord (says he) Joh. 6. 68.
to whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eter-
nal Life. If we return to Creatures, there's
 Vanity and Vexation; if to Angels, they could
 not secure their own Happiness; if we go to
 the Saints, to ask of their Oil, they will answer
 us, not so, least there be not enough for us
 and you too: They that have most have none

Heb. 10.
38.

to spare. Above all Things, dread drawing back: For if any Man draw back (says God) my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him. Now the Necessity of this Choice appears on several Accounts: For, what is Christ to me if he is not mine? The Antediluvians saw the Ark, and it's probable mocked Noah for preparing it; as Lot's Sons did him, for advising them to leave Sodom; but they all perished because not in it. There are many Christians that know not Christ, nor have any Union with him beyond the Name; therefore make sure of Christ as your own Portion.

Capt. 6. 9.

1st, Because he is but one. Whatever Divisions may be among Christians (which is for a Lamentation) Christ is not divided. What is said of the Church, or Spouse of Christ, may be applied to him; My Beloved is but One; his Coat was without Seam. If you choose Creatures to be your Portion, you provide for your selves perpetual Distraction. The pleasing of some draws on you the Displeasure of others. Don't we find great Contrarieties and Contentions in our own Breasts, by our Passions and Appetites; one throwing us into the Fire, and another into the Water? But with Christ there is nothing but Harmony; all his Ways are one, and all carry to one Home; like so many Paths or Tracts in the Highway, they all lie parallel. There is no crossing, or contradicting in the Christian Religion; all Christ's Ways and Words are Harmonious. And shall not this commend to us Mary's Choice?

2dly, He is all in one, or a full Provision. To take up with Creatures, is but to live from Door to Door, like Beggars. The Toil in getting,

ting, the Emptiness when gotten, the Care of keeping, Sin and Vexation in using, with the certainty of parting, make Men miserable in the midst of their Abundance of this World's Enjoyments. Nay, after all you can glean from the most liberal Benefactors, you can't patch up a Portion that will give you Satisfaction; but here's enough and to spare; here are not only *Creatures for Use*, but also *Grace and Glory* for Psal. 84: *Happiness*; yea, he will *fill your Treasures*; no^{11.} good Thing shall be with-holden from them, who walk uprightly with him. It is true, he may not give that which your carnal Appetite most craves; but this is only like denying a Friend in a Dropsie as much Drink as he desires, which to give him, would be Death. He will cure the Distemper, and then satisfy the desire. Here's constant Sweetness with the Enjoyment; for where-ever he is entertained, all Blessings come with him. He is a sufficient, suitable, permanent, and absolutely needful Portion, and therefore ought to be our Choice.

3dly, Your Course will follow your Choice. That a Work well begun is as good as half done, is a common Saying; but certain it is, that he who does not set out right in Religion, will never bring his Work to a comfortable Conclusion. Some delay all Choice with Relation to Christ, till they are old, and their Affairs settled in the World; this is to put that last which should be first, and to reserve for him the worst, who ought to have, and expects the best. Such will spend their Strength in the Devil's Service, and then design for Christ. Others know not how to chuse till all Parties are agreed. Why do not such decline all Business in the

the World, till all agree which is the best, and the one, above all others, to be preferred? or refuse all Food or Physic, till all are of a Mind what is the most proper for their Nourishment or Cure? Such only pretend the Dissentions about Religion, to cover their declining that, which in reality they hate; and many are always choosing, and ever learning, but never come to be established in the Truth; they are like a deceitful Bow, and bent to backslide. The Watch can never be regular and constant in its Motion, where there is a flaw or defect in the Spring; thus some Professors are unstable as Water, and cannot excel: They are like Hunters, that take the way the Game goes, falling in with that Religion as will best comport with their Affairs. But he that begins with Christ as his first Choice, will maintain a stedfast Course.

Psal. 119. *I have chosen the way of Truth*, saith the Psalmist; and therefore tho' the Proud had him

—51. 157. *greatly in Derision*, some scoffed, yea, *many were his Persecutors*; yet he could still say, *I have not declined from thy Testimonies*.

3. The last Use that I shall make of this Doctrine, shall be to such who have made *Mary's Choice*. Surely you have cause to be glad, and rejoice, and to say with the Psalmist, *The Lines are fallen unto me in pleasant Places, I have a goodly Heritage. I will bless the Lord who hath given me Counsel*. Such I shall only entreat to study, and improve their Choice, which will afford them Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. And,

Psal. 16.
6, 7.

(1.) Improve your Choice for the Entertainment and Pleasure of your own Minds. Here are Heights and Depths, and Lengths and Breadths,

Breadths, which employ the Understandings of Angels; surely then, enough to feast your inquisitive Minds. Shall sinless Angels admire and adore the Saviour, and shall Sinners neglect him, who have all their Hope in him, and are undone without him? This is the great Mystery in our Religion, and therefore to be reverently treated, and seriously studied. Here we may see the depth of our Misery in our Recovery; the Bitterness of that Wrath we deserved, in the dying Love of Christ to deliver us from it. *I determined* (says St. Paul) *not to know* 1 Cor. 2. *any Thing among you, save Christ and him crucified*: Christ, not only in the Mystery of his Person upon the Throne, but bleeding on the ignominious Tree. The way to improve in all Grace and Practice, is to study more Acquaintance with Christ and his Fulness. *Then shall* Hol. 6. 3. *we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, that his going forth is prepared as the Morning.*

(2.) Improve Christ as the delightful Object of your Choice. As in him you have all the Treasures of Knowledge and Truth, proper to entertain the Mind, or Understanding, with the highest Pleasure and Satisfaction; so his Fruits are a delightful Banquet for the Affections. What tho' prophane, blinded Deists, and Men of debauched Appetites, say they favour more Sweetness in a stinking Weed, than in the *Rose of Sharon*, and see no Beauty in the *Lilly of the Valley*; to you who have the Eye of Faith to see him, and have tasted of that Grace which is in him, he should be altogether lovely, and his Fruit sweet to your Taste. There is no such Entertainment, as in his Banqueting House; no Table so furnished, as that which Wisdom hath

hath prepared. Is Christ the Delight of Heaven? does he afford the most sublime and refined Pleasure to Angels and perfect Spirits? Surely that which feasts Princes, will feed poor Beggars. As for vain Sinners, tho' they may talk of variety of Delights, yet where they have a Fulness of all created Pleasures, they are not filled, and at bottom always find something that is imbittering; a guilty Conscience within is enough to spoil their sweetest Feasts, and dainty Fare: but here you may feed without fear of Excess; nor shall the Appetite be in danger of nauseating, nor meet with any Thing disagreeable. Pleasure always goes with the Provision of Christ's House, and with him you may *delight your Soul in fatness*. While others then, are drinking at their broken Cisterns, do you dwell at the Fountain, and seek all your intellectual Pleasure, and spiritual Rest and Delight, only in Christ, and what he hath provided.

(3.) Improve your Choice of Christ in your Practice, by a constant Dependance on him. *My Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus*. If you are called to resist the daring *Philistine*, like *David*, go out in the Name of the Lord. Every Step you take in your Way to Heaven, let it be like the Spouse, leaning on your Beloved. Tho' you pass through the Valley and Shadow of Death, let his Presence be your Support. This is to make him your All in Life, and your Comfort in Death, whereby you will at last receive this his Approbation: *Well done good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*.

